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CANADIAN DRUG TRAFFICKER SENTENCED TO MORE THAN 10 YEARS ***Pleaded Guilty to Ecstasy Trafficking and Money Laundering***

SACRAMENTO—Acting United States Attorney Lawrence G. Brown announced today that VICTOR FARUQ, 32, of Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, was sentenced today by United States District Judge John A. Mendez to 10 years and one month in federal prison followed by three years of federal supervised release. FARUQ pleaded guilty to distributing MDMA and money laundering on November 4, 2008.

This case is the product of an extensive investigation by the Sacramento High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) team, the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Internal Revenue Service, and the United States Secret Service. The investigation is part of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) that was established in 1982 to conduct comprehensive, multi-level attacks on major drug trafficking and money laundering organizations. Its principal mission is to identify, disrupt, and dismantle the most serious drug trafficking and money laundering organizations and those primarily responsible for the nation's drug supply.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Jason Hitt, who prosecuted the case, FARUQ admitted that, between January of 2007 and early April of 2007, he supplied multiple Sacramento-area drug dealers with large quantities of MDMA pills popularly known as "ecstasy," which is a synthetic, psychoactive drug chemically similar to the stimulant methamphetamine and the hallucinogen mescaline.

On April 5, 2007, Sacramento County narcotics detectives served a search warrant at FARUQ's residence in Elk Grove, Calif., and discovered approximately 300 ecstasy pills, more than \$68,000 in U.S. currency, and a bulletproof vest with the letters "POLICE" on it.

Detectives also located a key ring in FARUQ's possession. The key ring included a key that opened the door to a residence he used to store drugs also in Elk Grove. When Sacramento HIDTA members executed a search warrant at the Bruceville apartment, they located approximately 10,000 ecstasy pills. In his guilty plea, FARUQ admitted that the ecstasy pills belonged to him.

FARUQ was also convicted of two separate felony charges of money laundering. Specifically, he admitted that he paid more than \$65,000 in currency in less than two-and-a-half months to buy a 2003 Mercedes Benz S55 AMG. In his guilty plea, FARUQ admitted that he bought the Mercedes using proceeds from his ecstasy trafficking and registered the vehicle in the name of his friend to conceal that his drug money paid for the Mercedes. In addition, FARUQ admitted that he spent his drug money on an expensive watch from a jewelry store in El Dorado

Hills. He agreed with a co-defendant to conduct an “off the books” transaction to buy the watch using drug money. FARUQ and the jeweler agreed to conceal that he used drug money to buy the watch.

In sentencing FARUQ to more than 10 years in federal prison, United States District Judge John A. Mendez said that the severity of the federal sentence for trafficking MDMA reflected that the defendant’s large-scale distribution of ecstasy had hurt the most vulnerable members of the community because many young people are drawn to the abuse of ecstasy. Judge Mendez also cited Mr. FARUQ’s lack of any employment and his ties to the Canadian organized crime group known as the “Independent Soldiers” as factors warranting a severe sentence. Because FARUQ is a Canadian citizen illegally present in the United States, he will face deportation after serving his federal prison sentence.

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